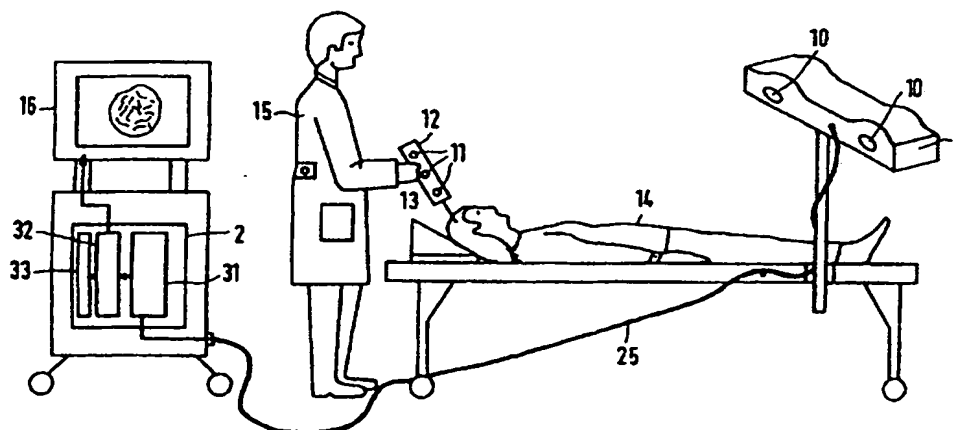




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(54) Title: IMAGE-GUIDED SURGERY SYSTEM



(57) Abstract

An image-guided surgery system includes an optical position measuring system (1, 2) for measuring the position of a surgical instrument (13) relative to a patient (14) to be operated or treated. Using a data processor (2), the position of the surgical instrument (13) is reproduced in an image displayed on a monitor (16). The optical position measuring system (1, 2) includes a camera unit (1) with two cameras (10). The camera unit (1) also includes a memory unit (3) in which data concerning the positions of the cameras (10) in the camera unit (1) relative to one another are stored.

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Image-guided surgery system.

- The invention relates to an image-guided surgery system, including
- an optical position measuring system for measuring the position of a surgical instrument relative to a patient,
 - which optical position measuring system includes a camera unit with two or
5 more cameras,
 - a calibration memory for storing the positions of the cameras in the camera unit relative to one another.

An image-guided surgery system of this kind is known from United States Patent 5,389,101.

- 10 An image-guided surgery system is used to show a surgeon the position of a surgical instrument in an operating zone in the body of the patient during surgery. Prior to surgery, images (for example, CT or MRI images) are made of the patient. During surgery the position measuring system measures the position of the surgical instrument relative to the patient and a data processor calculates the position in such a prerecorded image which
15 corresponds to the measured position of the surgical instrument. The prerecorded image is displayed on a monitor and the actual position of the surgical instrument is indicated therein. The surgeon can see where the surgical instrument is situated in the operating zone by observing the image displayed on the monitor, without the surgeon having a direct view thereof. The image on the monitor reveals how the surgeon can move the surgical instrument
20 in the operating zone without serious risk of unnecessarily damaging tissues and notably without risk of damaging vital organs.

An image-guided surgery system of this kind is preferably used in neurosurgery for showing the surgeon exactly where in the brain the surgical instrument is situated during cerebral surgery.

- 25 The position measuring system measures the position of the surgical instrument by recording images of the surgical instrument from different directions by means of two cameras. The data processor derives the position of the surgical instrument relative to the patient during surgery from image signals from the individual cameras and from the positions of the cameras relative to one another. The data processor of the known image-

guided surgery system includes a calibration memory in which data concerning the positions of the cameras relative to one another is stored. The data processor fetches the positions of the cameras relative to one another, required for the calculation of the position of the surgical instrument, from the calibration memory. It is a drawback of the known image-guided surgery system that a substantial amount of time is lost when the camera unit is to be replaced.

It is an object of the invention to provide an image-guided surgery system whose camera unit can be replaced quickly and simply.

This object is achieved by means of an image-guided surgery system according to the invention which is characterized in that the calibration memory is accommodated in the camera unit.

The calibration memory is loaded with the position data representing the positions of the cameras relative to one another. The position data is measured after the cameras have been mounted in the camera unit. When a camera unit is replaced, for example because of a defect in one of the cameras, the position data relating to the substitute camera unit are immediately available. This is because the substitute camera unit also includes a calibration memory loaded with the relevant position data. When the camera unit of an image-guided surgery system according to the invention is replaced, it is not necessary to measure the positions of the cameras relative to one another again and to reload the calibration memory. It is thus achieved that the image-guided surgery system is ready again for use practically immediately after replacement of the camera unit.

It is also possible for separate image-guided surgery systems to share camera units, i.e. various camera units are available as common units for separate image-guided surgery systems. The individual camera units can be used at will for individual image-guided surgery systems, without the interchanging introducing a risk of errors in the measured position of the surgical instrument.

A preferred embodiment of an image-guided surgery system according to the invention is characterized in that the calibration memory is provided with a Flash-EEPROM.

A Flash-EEPROM offers the advantage that it is particularly reliable. Moreover, contemporary Flash-EEPROMs are comparatively inexpensive.

A further preferred embodiment of an image-guided surgery system according to the invention is characterized in that the camera unit includes a microcontroller. The calibration memory and the microcontroller are preferably combined in an integrated

circuit.

The main task of the microcontroller is to provide the communication between the data processor and the calibration memory. For the calibration memory preferably a Flash-EEPROM is used, because the latter can be integrated with the
5 microcontroller in one integrated circuit.

These and other aspects of the invention will be apparent from and elucidated with reference to the embodiment described hereinafter. In the drawings:

Fig. 1 shows diagrammatically an image-guided surgery system in which the invention is used, and

10 Fig. 2 shows diagrammatically the camera unit of the image-guided surgery system shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1 shows diagrammatically an image-guided surgery system in which the invention is used. The image-guided surgery system includes the data processor 2 and the camera unit 1 with two cameras 10. The data processor 2 includes a computer 31. The
15 optical position measuring system includes the camera unit 1 and the computer 31 included in the data processor 2. The cameras pick up infrared signals which are emitted by three or more infrared sources 11, for example infrared emitting diodes (IREDs) mounted on the handle 12 of a surgical instrument 13. On the basis of the images of the IREDs 11 as picked up by the individual cameras 10, the computer 31 determines the position of the surgical
20 instrument 13 in the operating zone relative to the patient 14 undergoing surgery. The positions of the cameras 10 relative to one another are also required in order to calculate the position of the surgical instrument. These positions are represented by position data stored in the calibration memory 3. The computer 31 derives the necessary position data from the calibration memory 3. The surgical instrument 13 is handled by a surgeon 15. Image
25 information of the operating zone of the patient 14 is displayed on the monitor 16. The image information is, for example CT data or MRI data which has been recorded prior to the surgery so as to be stored in a memory unit 33 of the data processor 2. If desired, image information can be acquired again during surgery; for example, new CT images or MRI images can be picked up if necessary. The position of the surgical instrument 13 as
30 calculated by the computer 31 is transformed into the corresponding position in the CT image and/or MRI image. The transformed position and the CT data and/or MRI data are applied to an image processing unit 32 of the data processor 2 which derives an image signal therefrom which represents the image information of the CT data and/or MRI data, together with the position of the surgical instrument 13. The image displayed on the monitor 16 also shows the

position of the surgical instrument in the operating zone. The surgeon 15 is thus assisted in making the surgical instrument reach a desired location in the operating zone. It is not necessary now to form X-ray images continuously and it is not necessary either to remove large amounts of tissue so as to reach the desired location or to gain a more direct view of the surgical instrument in the operating zone. The image-guided surgery system allows for locations to be reached which are otherwise difficult to operate without unjustified risks for the patient.

In order to relate positions, notably the coordinates thereof, in the operating zone to positions in the image displayed, it is necessary to calibrate the image-guided surgery system. Given marks are included in the image information. These marks are, for example X-ray absorbing small objects or small objects which can be perceived by means of magnetic resonance. During calibration of the image-guided surgery system, the marks on the patient to be operated are successively pointed at by means of the surgical instrument and the positions of the marks on the patient are measured by means of the optical position measuring system. The computer 31 then calculates the transformation between the positions of the marks on the patient and the corresponding positions of the reproduction of the marks in the image displayed. This transformation also describes the relations between positions in the operating zone and positions in the reproduction of the image information of the relevant operating zone.

Fig. 2 shows diagrammatically the camera unit of the image-guided surgery system shown in Fig. 1.

The cameras 10 are mounted in a camera frame 20 in order to ensure that the distance between the cameras is not excessively susceptible to temperature fluctuations and/or shocks. The camera frame 20 includes a lightweight support 21 which is made of a titanium alloy and is suspended from an aluminium chassis 22. The support 21 is suspended from the chassis 22 by means of resilient means 23, for example shock absorbers.

After mounting of the cameras in the camera unit, the positions of the cameras relative to one another are accurately measured. These positions are stored in the calibration memory 3 as a calibration data set. The calibration set is read by the microcontroller 4 and applied to the data processor 2 via a cable connection. To this end an output 24 of the microcontroller 4 is connected to the cable 25. Preferably, the calibration memory 3 is a Flash-EPROM which can be integrated in an integrated circuit 5 together with the microcontroller 4.

CLAIMS:

1. An image-guided surgery system, including
 - an optical position measuring system (1, 10, 31) for measuring the position of a surgical instrument (13) relative to a patient (14),
 - which optical position measuring system (1, 10, 31) includes a camera unit (1) with two or more cameras (10),
 - a calibration memory (3) for storing the positions of the cameras (10) in the camera unit (1) relative to one another,characterized in that
 - the calibration memory (3) is accommodated in the camera unit (1).
- 10 2. An image-guided surgery system as claimed in Claim 1, characterized in that the calibration memory is provided with a Flash-EPROM.
3. An image-guided surgery system as claimed in Claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the camera unit includes a microcontroller.
4. An image-guided surgery system as claimed in Claim 3, characterized in
15 that the calibration memory and the microcontroller are integrated in one integrated circuit.

1/2

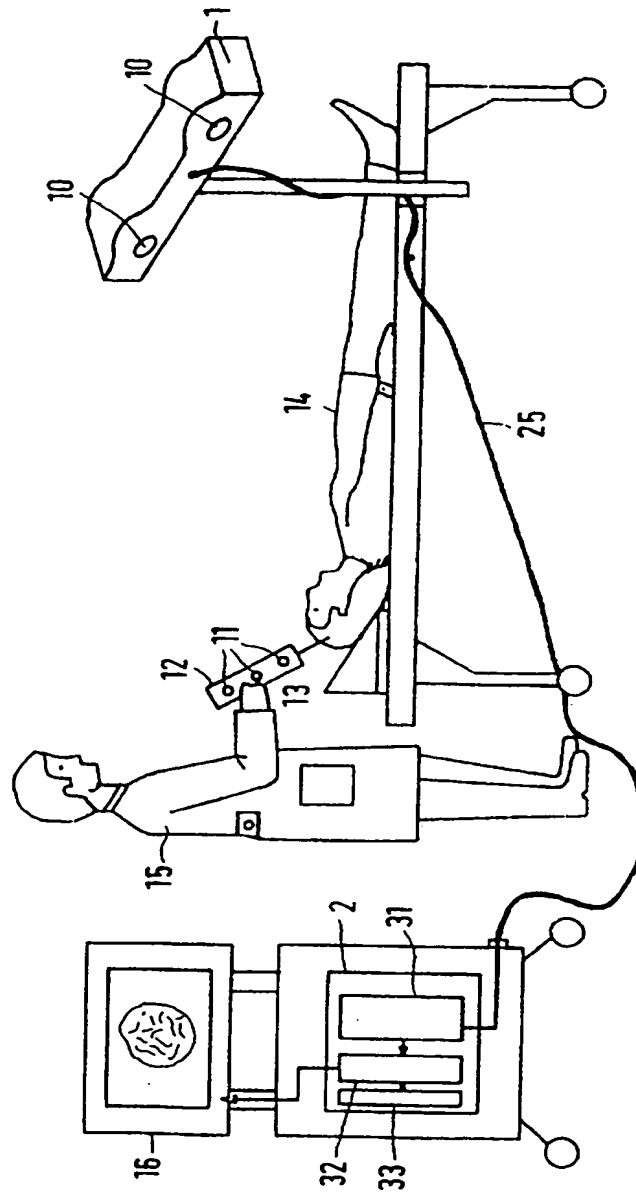


FIG.1

2/2

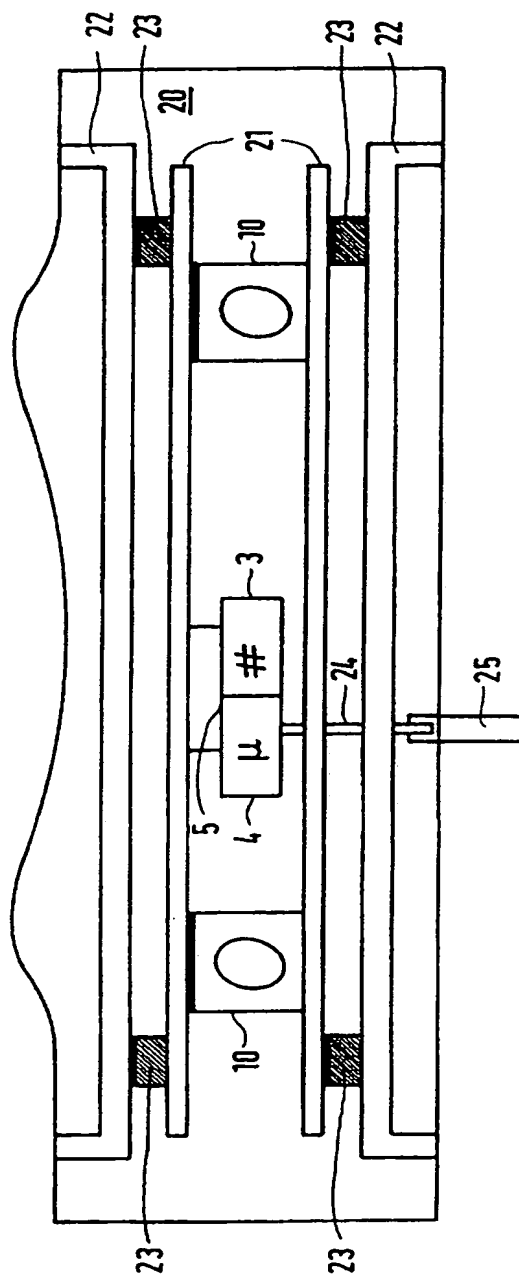


FIG. 2

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/IB 97/00460

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER		
IPC6: A61B 19/00 According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC		
B. FIELDS SEARCHED		
Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)		
IPC6: A61B, B25J		
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched		
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C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 5389101 A (M.P. HEILBRUN ET AL.), 14 February 1995 (14.02.95), column 5, line 18 - line 30; column 6, line 45 - line 57; column 11, line 5 - line 14 --	1-4
A	WO 9610949 A1 (MEDICAL MEDIA SYSTEMS), 18 April 1996 (18.04.96), page 25, line 17 - page 27, line 2; page 28, line 14 - line 15 -- -----	1-4
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Patent document cited in search report			Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US	5389101	A	14/02/95	US 5603318 A	18/02/97
WD	9610949	A1	18/04/96	AU 4002595 A	02/05/96